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ABSTRACT

Many intelligent, talented, and capable American Indian youngsters finish elementary and secondary schools but do not enter college. The majority of those who do go on to college experience difficulty in keeping an acceptable grade average; consequently, few graduate. Present Indian recruiting programs have failed to identify the reason for this. Indian students do not enter college because of lack of motivation. This is usually due to lack of encouragement from family and teachers, improperly planned high school curriculum, and a misunderstanding of the importance of advanced education. Several suggestions can be offered for effective recruiting programs that not only get Indian students into college and out with a degree, but with self confidence, acumen, and desire to proudly make his place in society. Among these suggestions are: recruitment must begin when the student first enters high school; Indians already in college must become involved in the recruitment programs of school with a high concentration of Indian students; the college must be able to offer financial aid; the college curriculum must be developed to allow these students to catch up in English, math, or science and also prepare them to graduate within 4 years; and social activities with other Indians in college must be made available. (NQ)

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COLLEGE RECRUITMENT OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

Many intelligent, talented and capable Indian youth finish elementary and secondary schools and do not enter college. Of the ones that do enter college, the majority experience difficulty in maintaining an acceptable grade point average. Among these, relatively few graduate. Conversely, the problems are simple and can be easily solved. However, formulating solutions require more thoughtful and constructive consideration. Let us concentrate on the problems present Indian recruiting programs have failed to identify and offer some suggestions for programs that will be effective in getting Indian high school graduates in to college and out, not only with his degree, but in the ideal sense, with the self confidence, acumen, and desire to make his place proudly in our now existing society.

Generally speaking, Indian youth go through elementary and high school with no desire, because of lack of motivation, to enter college. There are pervasive reasons for this attitude, ie; lack of encouragment from family and teachers, high school curriculum not properly planned, a misunderstanding or no understanding of the importance of advanced education. Intellectual, social and even cultural inadequacy all conspire to make the Indian high school student view college apprehensively and above his capabilities.

To the Indian parents, a college education is not a reality. In most cases they have had very little, if any, education, and view a high school education as a great accomplishment and sufficient for their needs. They do not visualize beyond this point. Therefore, the student does not receive encouragement from his family. Because of this he views graduation from elementary or high school as the final step in his formal education.

Today's Indian youth attend high schools that vary to extremes in type and

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quality. Most often they are either so curriculum misoriented they leave the student unprepared and unqualified to apply for enrollment in a college. As an example, one such high school is satisfied to accept the probability that the Indian student is educationally retarded. Consequently they plan a curriculum designed, not to benefit the individual student, but to get him through the program and out of their way. Another school, assuming the student is educationally retarded, and making no effort to prepare him for advanced learning, is content to steer his path towards a craft or trade. Both of the above deplorable conditions, which are astonishingly prevalent, limit or make non existent the Indian student's motivation and preparation for higher education.

The Indian youth today does not view himself as an intellectual in the white man's ways, socially or culturaly. He finds it difficult to imagine himself as a success in his chosen field. Because of these real or imagined inadequacies, he cannot perceive the importance of achievement in the white man's culture, which is alien to him and he can only believe to be hostile.

As you know, the young Indian considers college as an institution where wealthy people receive complex knowledge that only the very intelligent, THE WHITEMAN, can achieve. The young Indians simply do not apply for college on their own. <u>They must be motivated!</u>

We have stated the problem. Following are some suggestions in organizing a program to recruit Indian students. Success in our program is contigent upon:

1. Help the Indian student see the necessity of an advanced education.
2. Help him begin to plan early in adjusting his high school curriculum so that he will be qualified to enter college.
3. Assure him of a successful and happy experience while entering college.

I believe the above to be the obvious solution and suggest the following program to make it become a reality.

1. *Recruiting of the Indian student must begin when he first enters high school, not in his senior year. At the time he enters high school, the high school or the college concerned should sponsor field trips to nearby colleges and business communities. He would see and meet the students happily striving towards their degrees, and through this association, learn how their degrees can be used. At this point, learning of the misconceptions he may have had about college life would be dispelled.*

2. *Indians presently attending college must become involved in recruitment programs in Government boarding schools for Indians and other schools with a high concentration of Indian students. These students would not only give information on college attendance but would bring the student in contact with other Indians who have graduated from college or who are presently succeeding in college. To see and hear an Indian who is successful in college offers a great deal of encouragement to the young Indian listener.*

3. *The college must be able to offer funds to help those not on tribal scholarships or who are on BIA scholarships. (BIA now requires universities to pay half of all scholarships given to students). To offer an outstanding college program for the Indian student is useless unless the college can provide the financial help necessary to get the student into college and meet his financial needs while he is attending.*

4. *The college must also be prepared to offer a program which would insure that the Indian student, who may be behind in English, math or science, a curriculum allowing him to catch up in these fields, but would also prepare him to graduate within the normal four year period. This can be accomplished by special educational courses*

which do not fill the required subjects, but count in the overall number of required hours for graduation. Therefore, a student could take his first two years in general educational courses and by his Junior year move into his required major field.

5. An ideal program to get the Indian student to the college campus would be a summer session inviting high school graduates to the college campus and allowing them to get the feel of college life, thus allowing them to become used to their new environment before the regular school year begins. This program would include classes in study habits, facilities available, budgeting of finances, use of library, etc.

6. Another equally important program would be one that would provide social activities with other Indians attending the college and offer a place on campus where the Indian student could gather in compatability and comfort with other Indian students. Too often the Indian is taken from his environment and put into one that is alien (in his mind), and be left alone to become homesick and disheartened, eventually quitting school to return to his old familiar environment with perhaps a more hostile feeling towards the white man because of his failure.

Every year, Indian Tribal Councils, the BIA and colleges offer educational stipends and grants to Indian students who qualify and desire to apply for them. However, only a relatively few young Indians come forward to claim them. Because of this, and from the statistics available to them, the colleges and educators believe, and rightfully so, they have tried but the Indian is not interested in advanced education.

I am firmly convinced that if the colleges would use or apply some of the suggestions of "Out-Reach" they would immediately have outstanding results.